



**Title: Christmas Treasures Worth Pondering**  
**Theme: What is so Special about Christmas**  
**Series: Grasping the Truths of Christmas**

“But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19)

## **There is much in “Grasping the Truths of Christmas” that is worthy of pondering**

*On the twenty-fifth of this month much of the United States will close their stores, business offices will be closed and very few people will be traveling in comparison to the normal day of the week. Christmas has even provided a day off for those who reject the worship due to Christ, the Savior of the world.*

The response of most today, even church attendees, is no where near like those who heard the proclamation of the birth of Christ on that first Christmas. However, to Holy Spirit-illuminated Christians there are treasures worth pondering in their hearts. They become like Mary, who in the midst of all the excitement, took time to ponder. The Bible says, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19)

This passage of Scripture is the beautiful picture of a humble trusting heart that is after God. Mary had been told that her child was truly of God. The angel Gabriel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35) Both Joseph and Mary were told that they were to name the baby, conceived through the Holy Spirit, Jesus. (Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 1:31,35) Mary and Joseph no doubt talked about their visits from the angel with each other over the several months of her pregnancy, therefore, she knew more than anybody that baby Jesus was the Messiah, (*Messias*) the Christ, (*Christos*) meaning “the anointed One” or the “anointed.” (The New International Dictionary of the Bible)

We live in a time which names mean very little or nothing. However, Joseph and Mary lived in a time when names meant something and almost everyone knew what they meant. I am convinced they knew why they were to name the Son of God, Jesus, (*Iesous*) meaning “Savior.” (The Complete Word Study Dictionary) As a matter of fact the angel, in a dream, told Joseph that he was to give the son born to them the name “Jesus” “because he [would] save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

Mary “pondered” (sumballo) meaning to consider, putting one thing with another in her mind while considering the circumstances and all that has been said and then holding them in her heart. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Vines Amplified Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words; Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon)

*I would propose to you there is much in “Grasping the Truths of Christmas” that is worthy of pondering, worth meditating on, and holding within the child of God’s heart. If you are a child of God, then the Holy Spirit has come into your life and has given you revelation and illumination about Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Holy Anointed One, the Savior of your soul. There is much for you to ponder on this Christmas.*

*What is so special about Christmas? Is there relevance in Christmas? What is the reason for and the result of Christmas?*

### **Many do not know the “Relevance of Christmas”**

*There are three truths that the Holy Spirit of God wants you to ponder on today. Many do not know the “Relevance of Christmas.” “Relevant,” means having to do with the case at hand.*

The Apostle Paul writes about the case at hand, Jesus Christ, “...being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

On June 6, 1944, a date known ever since as D-Day, a mighty armada crossed a narrow strip of sea from England to Normandy, France. Simultaneously U.S., British, and Canadian forces landed on five separate beachheads. By the end of August 1944, just three months later all of northern France was liberated, and the invading forces reorganized for the drive into Germany, where they eventually meet with Soviet forces advancing from the east to bring an end to the Nazi grip on western Europe. That was big news regarding the results of World War II.

Just a little over 2,000 years ago, bigger news came through the angel announcing the birth of Christ, when God in the flesh came, walked on this war-torn earth during it’s battle with man’s sinful flesh, the world’s view and Satan. Sin always holds a multitude in its grip. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit invaded and broke that grip by Jesus coming on the first Christmas. Jesus, being God and man, made the way to take on the sins of the world upon Himself, pay the ultimate price on the Cross of Calvary, be raised from the dead thus, getting victory over sin and death and liberating all who accept Him as personal Savior and Lord.

One truth worth pondering in Christ's coming is that He "emptied Himself" or rather "made Himself nothing" and became man. This was not "the humility of Christ," but rather what theologians refer to as the "humiliation of Christ." (The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible; Thru the Bible)

Let the Holy Spirit place this deep within your heart, the Lord of the universe – He who existed in eternity and perfection, in glory and majesty, in dominion and power stepped down and came to walk this guilty sod, which is so full of sin, so He could take on the humiliation of sin.

Ponder these Biblical truths about Christ being man:

1.) The Lord, whom we are to serve for eternity came to serve us. As a matter fact one of His purposes in coming was to show all what God is like. He taught that Christians are to become His disciples and He said, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22:25-27)

2.) The Lord, whom we are to love, came and showed the ultimate love for us. Jesus said, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12-13) There is a truth proclaimed often this time of the year, "Christ was born to die" and He commands us to have the same measure of love for our brothers in Christ as He showed for us. The beloved John caught the truths of Jesus' teaching. We read in 1 John 3:16, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." (1 John 3:16)

3.) The Lord, whom we are to seek with all our hearts so that He may be found, came to seek that which was lost. While in the home of the tax collector, Zacchaeus, the Lord said, "Today salvation has come to this house... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:9-10) This passage of Scripture expresses the heart of Jesus' ministry.

Those who are bound by the flesh, the world and Satan's lies are always looking for something and are not listening for the call of the Lord upon their souls. However, He left the abode of God, heaven, to seek that which is lost and offer fellowship to those who will let Him into their hearts and lives.

### **Jesus came for a specific reason**

*Christ coming to earth is worth pondering in the hearts of Christians.* Jesus also came for a specific reason.

Many people and church attendees today form their views of the true God much as the pagan mythologist did. Their view of God is the product of their own experiences or the experiences they have heard recounted by others and is not formed by seeing God's inerrant revelation of Himself in the Scriptures. (Dr. Jim Berg, Created for His Glory)

The Bible says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning... The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1-2,14)

This is the basic statement of the Incarnation, for Jesus entered into this earth through the gateway of childbirth and took up residence among men. His incarnation was the full manifestation of grace and truth because it was the greatest possible expression of God's compassion for people and the most perfect way of conveying truth to their understanding." God's personal revelation of Himself in Christ has no parallel elsewhere, nor has it ever been repeated. (The expositors Bible Commentary; Barnes Notes) The incarnation is often very hard to fully explain in just a phrase or sentence.

Paul Harvey took time to tell the story of a man whom the Lord gave a glimpse of one of the purposes of the incarnation.

On a raw winter night a man heard an irregular thumping sound against the kitchen storm door. He went to a window and watched as tiny, shivering sparrows, attracted to the evident warmth and light that was inside, beat in vain against the glass.

Touched, the farmer bundled up and trudged through the fresh snow to open the barn door for the struggling birds. He turned on the lights, tossed some hay in a corner, and sprinkled a trail of saltine crackers to direct them into the barn. But the sparrows, which had scattered in all directions when he emerged from the house, hid in the darkness.

He tried various tactics; circling behind the birds to drive them toward the barn, tossing cracker crumbs in the air toward them, retreating to his house to see if they would flutter into the barn on their own. Nothing worked and the birds could not understand that he actually desired to help. He withdrew to his house and watched the doomed sparrows through a window. As he stared, a thought hit: "If only I could become a bird – one of them – just for a moment in time... I could lead them to warmth and safety." Meditating on this thought he grasped a principle of the incarnation. Notice, I said a principle to the incarnation, not the whole truths of it.

Christ coming in the flesh was for man to see what God is like and to show Christians how to live the abundant life in the midst of a sin-torn world. William Barclay wrote in regards to the incarnation, "In Jesus we see the creating Word of God, the controlling reason of God, taking manhood upon Himself. In Jesus we see God living life as He would live it, thus, showing us how we should live on earth."

Because of the incarnation, through Jesus Christ we see what real love is and how to show it to others. We see how to communicate to God through prayer and how to live a life of obedience to God's commands and decrees, how to defeat the attacks of Satan, overcome the flesh and the world. Through knowing the life Christ lived down here on earth, we see what it is like to live a life that truly trusts in God.

Jesus is the embodiment of all that God is. Jesus said, "... Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:9) Jesus came to make understanding God simplistic. Very few people can grasp abstract ideas; most people think in pictures. We could think and argue forever and we would very likely not be able to give a clear definition of beauty. It seems ever since modern man began to think about God he has have been trying to define just who and what He is – and the best description of Him cannot be clearer than getting Holy Spirit revelation through the written Word of God about Christ. (William Barclay) A lifetime of study and thought could not exhaust the truths of the incarnation.

One more treasure worth pondering is, "...We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only..." (John 1:14)

"Glory," (*doxes*) as it is used here, means God's self-manifestation was exhibited in the character and life of Jesus Christ. God's glory was recognized in Jesus' divine character. (Vines Amplified Expository Dictionary; The Complete Word Study) Jesus was the glorious power and the full perfect guiding light of God, the magnificence of God. This word, glory, refers to that which is the visible presence of God among men. (William Barclay)

The practical application of what Jesus was and is can be explained by meditating upon Exodus 40:34-38. The cloud in Exodus symbolized God's presence. What John is saying is, "We beheld," actually saw, the Shekinah glory, God's very presence actually living among us. (Practical Word Studies in the New Testament) Because of everything Jesus did upon this earth and His going to the Father and the sending the Holy Spirit to us, we can behold the presence of Christ living in us through the Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8:9-11) There is no greater Christmas present than having, experiencing and enjoying the life changing presence of Jesus Christ in our lives. And that is a treasure worth pondering.

***Christians today can really know the Lord***

*Just as the people in the time of Jesus walking upon this earth beheld the glory of God, Christians today can really know the Lord.*

The life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus mean that God acted decisively to save people from sin and eternal death. The God who saves people in Christ is the God of His redeemed, those who are under the blood of Jesus Christ. And when sinners find Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord they are allowed to come to God because of the cost paid at Calvary. These Christians are under the new covenant of whom the writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote about.

In Hebrews 8:10-12 the writer quotes Jeremiah as he foresaw this dispensation that we live in today, which is Jesus Christ being Mediator. (Hebrews 8:10-12; The Expositors Bible Commentary; Barnes Notes; Matthew Henry Commentary; The Pulpit Commentary)

Hebrews 8:10-12 says "...I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Hebrews 8:10-12)

All those who enter into the new covenant and are interested in all that the Lord is doing in this time in which we live today, will become acquainted with the Lord; learn His character and determine His will for them in this life and service unto Him. Each child of God will have his own intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus. God Himself will put His Holy Spirit within each of them and He will write His Word upon their hearts and move them to follow His decrees and be careful to keep His laws. The Lord says through Ezekiel, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

The ministry that Jesus had on this earth surpassed that of the Levitical priesthood and His ministry is far more exciting. (Hebrews 8:6; The Expositors Bible Commentary) He will have worshipers who from the heart are obedient to Him, worship, which come from an expression of love rather than from works trying to obtain merit before the Lord. He will move them by His Holy Spirit to seek His truths found in God's Word, thus, birthing a relationship built on trust and faithfulness.

I remember before I got saved nearly twenty years ago, I had no draw to the things of God. I had no desire to be in the house of God, have fellowship with Christians, and there was no way I was going to read the Bible. I got saved in August 1987 and in September the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart about getting a Bible and by October the Lord gave me a hunger to be in His Word. To this day He moves me to want to know more and constantly reminds me to strive for obedience to it.

The Holy Spirit moved me to study God's Word in January of 1991 and He enabled me to stay up late at night, He moved on this church, CrossRoads Church to pay for my schooling and by May of 1998 after many trials He made the way for me to obtain 82 credit hours with the Assembly of God, maintaining a 3.5 GPA. In the last 6 months, the Holy Spirit has put a new fire in my heart for prayerfully reading God's Word and just recently a desire for deeper study. I have always read and studied the Word; however, this is a fresh touch. I want to know more of God's Word, more of Him, more of Christ and have a deeper walk with the Holy Spirit. For weeks now I've sat in my chair, pondering on how I can get to know more of God, Christ and enjoy a deeper fellowship in the Holy Spirit. In my office for weeks now I have been silently praying asking the Lord for Bible software so I can have what I need to prayerfully work on critical ministry needs when I am away from my office.

Just recently my wife came and told me what she wants to get me for Christmas. She had heard on AFR about a new high quality Bible software used by people who I know are greatly used of God, Christians like Kay Arthur, Joshua McDowell, John MacArthur and John Piper and many more.

Is this taking us off the point of the knowing God? No, for God's Word says in the very same Book of Hebrews in chapter 13:7-8, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:7-8)

There are Christians that the Lord is going to bring into your path that live the life, that excel in what God is called them to do and have some kind of spiritual authority over you. "Leaders," (*hegeomai*) here is a general term, therefore, this means anyone who has authority over you and has the Biblical integrity to teach you the Word of God in regards to all that you are doing. Most generally these leaders will be elders or spiritual leaders in a church. It is the outcome of their ministry that determines your loyalty and your undivided attention. Once Christian character is established, take heed to their teachings and imitate their faith in God, their obedience to Christ and their willingness to walk by the leading of the Holy Spirit of God, in good times, trials and victory over temptations. (Thayers Greek-English Lexicon; The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Thru the Bible; Matthew Henry Commentary; The Expositors Bible Commentary)

The Lord is going to use His Word and set before you Christians, who live a life reflecting a relationship with Him, to show you how you should live the Christian life before your family, friends and co-workers. Knowing God and how to know Him more is worth pondering in the heart of Christians.

## **Have you opened the gift God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit has for you**

*What is so special about Christmas?* The Christ and the walk He had on this earth is "Relevant." God sent His Son to invade the dominion of sin upon this earth and the Holy Spirit to liberate Christians from the grip of the flesh, the world and the devil.

Christ coming in the flesh was for man to see what God is like and to show Christians how to live the abundant life in the midst of a sin-torn world. Because of the incarnation, through Jesus Christ we see what real love is and how to show it to others. We see how to communicate to God through prayer and how to live a life of obedience to God's commands and decrees. Knowing about the life of Christ gives us the knowledge of how to truly trust in God.

Because of Christmas, Christians can know God, be intimate with Christ, learn His character and determine His will for them in this life and service unto Him.

Rick Warren told about a very embarrassing time in His life when he found an unopened Christmas gift in one of his drawers of his desk. The gift was given to him a year before at Christmas time. He opened it and it said, "A gift for Rick Warren." It was a wonderful gift and he was concern that the certificate had expired. The point is an unopened gift is a worthless gift.

Have you opened the gift God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit has for you? You can choose this day to enjoy the gift of getting victory in your life through having Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. Thus, the flesh, the world, and the Devil will no longer have a death grip on your heart and life.

Have you grasped the glory of the incarnation of Christ? Do you live a life that expresses Christ-like character, a hunger for God's will in this life and service unto Him?

Let us pray!

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